

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:244

ANSWERED ON:14.03.2001

INDO-USA TIES

DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA;SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high ranking bipartisan task force of U.S. policy makers and scholars has asked Washington to devise a new and more appropriate strategy to deal with New Delhi as reported in the Hindustan Times dated February 14, 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;and (

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to strengthen the relations with the new Government of USA?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Asia Foundation, a non-official U.S. institution engaged in the study of Asia and relations between the United States and Asian countries, published a report in February 2001 titled `America's Role in Asia: American Views`. This report, inter alia, contains the views of the authors on relations between the United States and India.

Amongst other views, it also recommends that the new Administration should build upon the recent expansion of relations with India through regular dialogue. Government has also seen reports of several other non-official U.S. institutions, which have made similar recommendations. Government is aware that there is a broad, bipartisan support in the United States, including in the U.S. Congress, for closer relations between India and the United States.

(c) Government has had contact with members of the Bush Administration, both during the U.S. presidential campaign and after President George W. Bush entered office on 20th January 2001. Prime Minister and President Bush have corresponded and conversed over the telephone. Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and the National Security Advisor met the U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on 3rd February 2001 at the Munich Conference on Security Policy. Our Ambassador in Washington has also had productive meetings with the U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. I will visit Washington in the first week of April to meet the U.S. Secretary of State.

President Bush has expressed a desire to foster a stronger and mutually beneficial relationship between the two countries. He has also conveyed to the Prime Minister his appreciation of the progress made in Indo-U.S. relations before his assuming the office of President and his commitment to continue that progress.